Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 02 — Baillie, Charles (1542-1625)

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BAILLIE, or **BAILLY**, CHARLES (1542–1625), a member of the household of Queen Mary, was by birth a Fleming, though by descent a Scot. A letter in the State Papers (*Calendar*, Scottish series, p. 574) mentions him as a 'great papist, who lived with the queen of Scots after her husband was murdered.' In all probability he was from the beginning a papal agent, and having the mastery of several European languages he was, after the imprisonment of Mary, employed in fomenting foreign plots on her behalf. In the spring of 1571 he was about to leave Flanders with copies, which he had got printed at the Liège press, of a book by the bishop of Ross in defence of Queen Mary, when Rudolfi, the agent of Pius V, entrusted him with letters in cipher for the queen, and also for the Spanish ambassador, the duke of Norfolk, the bishop of Ross, and Lord Lumley. They described a plan for a Spanish landing on behalf of Mary in the eastern counties of England. As soon as Baillie set foot on shore at Dover, he was arrested and taken to the Marshalsea. The letters were, however, conveyed in secret by Lord Cobham to the bishop of Ross, who, with the help of the Spanish ambassador, 'composed others of a less incriminating character to be laid before Lord Burghley. The scheme might have been successful had not Burghley made use of a traitor, named Thomas Herle, to gain the confidence of Baillie, whom Herle describes as 'fearful, full of words, glorious, and given to the cup, a man easily read.' Herle had also gained the confidence of the bishop, and a complete exposure of the whole plot was

imminent when an indiscretion on the part of Herle convinced Baillie that he was betrayed. He endeavoured to warn the bishop by a letter, but it was intercepted, and Baillie was conveyed to the Tower, where, on his declining to read the cipher of the letters, he was put on the rack. The following inscription, still visible on the walls, records his reflections inspired by the situation: 'L. H. S. 1571 die 10 Aprilis. Wise men ought to se what they do, to examine before they speake; to prove before they take in hand; to beware whose company they use; and, above all things, to whom they truste. — Charles Bailly.' These sound maxims he seems to have forgotten as soon as he had written them. One night there appeared at his bedside the figure of a man who said that he was Dr. Story, whom Baillie knew to be in the Tower awaiting execution. In reality the figure was that; of a traitor of the name of Parker; but Baillie fell into the trap with the same facility as before. On the advice of Parker he endeavoured to gain credit with Burghley by deciphering the substituted letters of the bishop of Ross. He revealed also the story of the abstracted packet, and sought to persuade Burghley to grant him his liberty by offering to watch the correspondence of the bishop of Ross. That he gained nothing by following the advice of his second friendly counsellor is attested by an inscription in the Beauchamp tower as follows: 'Principium eapientie timor Domini, I. H. S. X. P. S. Be friend to no one. Be enemye to none. Anno D. 1571, 10 Septr. The most unhapy man in the world is he that is not pacient in adversities; for men are not killed with the adversities they have, but with ye

impacience which they suffer. Tout vient apoient, quy peult attendre. Gli sospiri ne son testimoni veri dell' angolcia mia, aet. 29. Charles Bailly.' In all probability Baillie received his liberty about the same time as the bishop of Ross, in 1573. At any rate it appears, from a letter in the State Papers (foreign series, 1572-74, entry 1615), that in 1574 he was in Antwerp. He died 27 Dec. 1625 in his 85th year, and was interred in the churchyard of Hulpe, a village near Brussels, where, in the inscription on his tombstone, he is designated as 'Sir Charles Bailly, secretaire de la Royne d'Ecosse decapitée pour la foy catholiq.'

[Murdin's Burghley State Papers; State Papers, Foreign series (1572-74), entry 1615; State Papers, Scotch series, pp. 574, 897, 898, 899; Notes and Queries, 2nd series, viii. 267, 316; 3rd series, v. 284; Guardian Newspaper, 21 Sept. 1859; Bayley's History of the Tower, pp. 145-9, 176; Britton's Memoirs ot the Tower, pp. 320-22; Hepworth Dixon's Her Majesty's Tower; Inscriptions in the Beauchamp Tower, 1853 (with facsimile illustrations); Froude's History of England, Library ed. x. 209-20.]

T. F. H.

Dictionary of National Biography, Errata (1904), p.12

N.B.— *f.e.* stands for *from end* and *l.l.* for *last line*

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